

An Analysis of *But/Other Than*-Correlatives as 'But/Than' Clefts*

Doo-Shick Kim
(Gyeongsang Nat'l University)

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There is some disagreement among scholars and dictionaries concerning the categorial statuses of *but/than*, especially in cases where *but* or *other than* is followed by a *to*-infinitive, root infinitive, gerund, AP, and the like. In this paper, these tricky cases are assumed to be a kind of *but/other than*-correlative construction, where *but* or *than* is treated as correlative coordinate conjunction. The paper proposes '*but/than*-clefts' for these correlative constructions and presents semantic and syntactic evidence of their similarity to *wh*-clefts. Semantically, *but/other than*-correlatives are the same focusing devices as *wh*-clefts in that the highlighting effect can be created by the focused element's being singled out from the rest of the members of the set. Syntactically, *but/than*-clefts take the same syntactic categories in the focus position as *wh*-clefts. Functionally, given the *but/than*-clefting, *but/other than*-correlatives are viewed as expressing 'NP only VP' in a roundabout way for a rhetorical purpose, compared with their assumed underlying sentences. This paper also shows that the only difference between *wh*-clefts and *but/than*-clefts relates to the difference in the highlighting effect created depending on whether for the selection of the focused element, the focused element itself or the remaining elements is/are excluded from the whole set.

Key words: *but/other than*-correlative constructions, *wh*-clefts, '*but/than*-clefts,' the nonassertive context, the semantic/functional parallelism condition, the 'Whole-Part' relation, the holistic reading

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1. Introduction

One of the more vexatious questions that English usage has to deal with is the question of whether *but* or *than* is a preposition or a conjunction¹⁾. The *but* and *than* in (1) can be considered as prepositions since they are followed by NP's as their objects, but those in (2) and (3), strictly speaking, can not be prepositions.

- (1) a. I have no friend **but** <you>.
 b. I have no other friend **than** <you>.

- (2) a. She's one of those guests who does nothing **but** <complain>.
 b. He desired nothing **but** <to succeed>.
 c. He never went to church **but** <to get married>.
 d. She's not interested in anything **but** <skiing>.
 e. That little bridge is anything **but** <safe>.
 f. She all **but** <kissed us>.

- (3) a. He cannot do other **than** <go>.
 b. They have left us with no other choice **than** <to take formal action>.
 c. She can hardly be other **than** <grateful>. (Oxford, 1978)

It can be seen in the above sentences that various types of syntactic categories can occur after *but* or *than*. That the *buts* and *thans* in (2) and (3) can not be prepositions is not sufficient enough to explain those various types of syntactic categories after *but* or *than*. This paper concerns why this diversity happens. To solve this question, it first will be shown that all the *but*'s or *than*'s in (1) to (3) behave as coordinate conjunctions. As pieces of evidence for this, the semantic equivalence/parallelism holding between the left and right conjuncts will be presented. Also this paper argues for the analysis of *but*/(*other*) *than*-correlative constructions as clefts based on the similarity to the syntax and semantics of *wh*-clefts. This argument for '*But/Than*' clefts naturally accounts

1) According to the conventional definition, a preposition is a word that introduces a prepositional phrase, whereas a conjunction is a word usually used to join one phrase or clause to another.

for the appearance of various types of categories in the right conjunct and the status of *but/than* as coordinate conjunction.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 attempts to explore the possibility of viewing the status of *but/than* as coordinate conjunction and Section 3 discusses the semantic and syntactic similarity between *but/(other) than*-correlative constructions and *wh*-clefts. Based on this discussion, in Section 4, the analysis of *but/(other) than*-correlatives as so-called *but/than*-cleft is proposed, and Section 5 presents a summary and a conclusion from the discussions in the previous sections.

2. *But/Than* as Correlative Conjunctions

Like determiners such as *all*, *much* or *this*, 'but' or 'than' is one of the grammatical categories which show more than two statuses in parts of speech depending upon sentences. There is some dispute among scholars and dictionaries over the categorial statuses of *but/than*. As Gilman (1989: 892) points out, "a dispute over whether *but* or *than* is a preposition or a conjunction has been going on now for more than two centuries."

The *but*'s/*than*'s in all sentences in (5) (except sentence (4)) below are troublesome since they show discrepancies in their statuses.

- (4) This car has been *nothing* but trouble. (+ NP)
- (5) a. She's one of those guests who does *nothing* but complain. (+ R-infinitive)
 b. He desired *nothing* but to succeed. (+ to-infinitive)
 c. This car is *anything* but slow. (+ AP)
 d. The job is *all* but finished! (+ P. Perf)
 e. I *cannot* but admire your decision. (+ R-infinitive)
 f. I *have no choice* but to accept the fact. (+ to-infinitive)
 g. There's *no choice* other than to reopen his case. (+ to-infinitive)
 h. I *would sooner* give up sleep than miss my evening class. (+ R-infinitive)

(Note that the *but* in (4) is mostly considered as a preposition since it is followed by an NP as its object.) Those differences checked in current

dictionaries are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Categorical Statuses of *but/than* across Dictionaries

No. of Exx Dict ²⁾	(5a) & (5b)	(5c)	(5d)	(5e)	(5f)	(5g)	(5h)
Collins Cobuild	Prep	Qual. (as Phr) ³⁾	Qual. (as Phr)	Conj	Prep	No Mention	Conj
Cambridge	Prep+ Conj	No Mention	Prep+ Conj	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention
Oxford	Conj	Prep	No Mention	Conj	Conj	No Mention	Prep+ Conj
Longman	No Mention	No Mention	Adv	No Mention	Conj	Conj	Conj
Webster	No Mention	No Mention	No Mention	Prep	Prep	No Mention	No Mention

Table 1 shows that more than half of the dictionaries never mention or describe differently the status of *but/than* of each sentence in (5). Additionally, there is seldom any consensus about the choice of preposition or conjunction as the status of *but/than*. Some of them are treated as both preposition and conjunction.⁴⁾ This means that the categorical status of those *but's/than's* is never easy to define or identify.

One point to be clearly made is that to view the *but's/than's* as prepositions would cause a problem since if they were prepositions they would have to be followed by a gerund, instead of the infinitive. If they were viewed as conjunctions, they would have to be correlative conjunctions since they always occur with endorsing items such as any, no, or all, which appear in front (Quirk et al., 1985: 936). Examples of *but*

2) The dictionaries used for this purpose are *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (1987), *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995), *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (2000), *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1978), and *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (1997).

3) Collins Cobuild views as qualifiers the *but's* in examples (4c) and (4d), constituting a phrase combined with anything or all.

4) Gilman (1989) concludes that "the absolutists who insist that *but* is only a conjunction or only a preposition are wrong. *But* has functioned in both capacities since Old English and still does." (p.213) He also concludes that "*than* has been a conjunction since Old English, but it has only been a preposition since the 16th century." (p.892) He asserts that we are correct in choosing to use it either way and that the preposition is more common in speech than in edited prose.

(not for *than*) as a correlative conjunction can clearly be found in (6):

- (6) a. He came not to help, but to hinder us.
- b. They not only broke into his office and stole his books, but (also) tore up his manuscripts.
- c. I'm sorry, but you're not allowed to go in there.

Note that the *but*'s in (6) are not so sensitive to their endorsing items as those in (1) to (5). Thus (6c) allows *but* to occur in front without a negative element.

If *but/than* can be treated as a correlative conjunction, there is still the question of whether it is a coordinate or subordinate. The answer differs depending upon where the omitted elements are located. The case where conjunctions and their 'preceding' elements are omitted supports the status of *but/than* as a coordinate, whereas the case where conjunctions and their 'following' elements are omitted supports the status of *but/than* as a subordinate. The following examples provide evidence for the former case.

- (7) a. (Both David and) Joan got divorced.
- b. He has met (either her mother or) her father.
- (8) a. We've had (nothing but) trouble with this car.
- b. We had (no alternative but) to fire him.
- c. He (never) went to church (but) to get married.
- (9) a. (No one other than) your brother should be appointed manager.
- b. I'd (rather play tennis than) swim.

This kind of omission is easily found in genuine coordinate constructions like (7). The same behavior is observed in (8) and (9), which involve *but/than* under discussion. It is inferred from this that the *but/than* can be considered as a coordinate.

It should be noticed here that the same type of omission is not allowed in subordinate constructions, as shown in (10) and (11).

- (10) a. I know him *(better than) you do.
- b. There were *(fewer people than) might have been expected.

- (11) a. Tom is *(as tall as) Jim is.
 b. He told us ?(so funny a story/such a funny story that) we all laughed.
 c. We'd *(hardly) arrived (when) we had to go back.

On the other hand, the latter case of omission, which supports the status of *but/than* as a subordinate, is exemplified in (12) and (13).

- (12) a. He desired nothing (but to succeed).
 b. They left me with no option (other than to resign).
- (13) a. I know him better (than you (do)).
 b. His latest play is not so much a farce (as a burlesque tragedy).
 c. Such girls (as he knows) were teachers.
 d. He told us so funny a story/such a funny story (that we all laughed).

The omission of *but/than* containing what follows does not do (12) any harm. This is fully understandable in genuine subordinate constructions like (13). It can be inferred that the *but/than* at issue can be considered as a subordinate conjunction.

It should be pointed out here that even if both *but* and *than* can be treated equally as a coordinate conjunction, they behave differently with respect to their movement. Let us consider these.

- (14) a. Everyone <but you> has helped.
 b. Everyone's helped <but George>.
 c. <But for you> /*<But you>, everyone has helped.
- (15) a. Nothing <other than an immediate custodial sentence> could be justified.
 b. *Nothing could be justified <other than an immediate custodial sentence>.
 c. *<other than an immediate custodial sentence>, nothing could be justified.
- (16) a. I'd rather play tennis <than swim>.
 b. *<Than swim>, I'd rather play tennis.

- c. <Rather than swim>, I'd play tennis.

As shown above, the *but* case is less constrained in movement than the (*other*) *than* case. This might seem to be due to the more common use of *but* as preposition than that of *than*.⁵⁾

The observation made so far regarding the status of *but/than* may be meaningful but not decisive. More important is the syntactic parallelism which is to be maintained between two conjuncts before and after *but/than*. As is well known, categorial identity is the deciding factor governing coordination. Thus (17a), where two conjuncts are syntactically parallel, allows the two NPs to be acceptably conjoined, whereas (17b), where they are not syntactically parallel, does not.

- (17) a. John sang a *hymn* and a *carol*.
 b. *John sang *beautifully* and a *carol*.

Since this syntactic parallelism becomes a necessary constraint on the coordinate conjunction, it distinguishes between the *but* as a coordinate conjunction and the *but* as a subordinate one. Let us consider (18).

- (18) a. <I'd like to go> *but* <I'm too busy>.
 b. The purpose of the scheme is not <to help the employers> *but* <to provide work for young people>.
- (19) a. There's no doubt *but* **that Evans is guilty**.
 b. Not a day goes by *but* **that I think of Geoff!**
 c. There is no man *but* **loves his own country**.

Based on this criterion, it is decided that the *but*'s in (18), where two S's are conjoined, is a coordinate conjunction, whereas the *but*'s in (19) are

5) Note that for the use as preposition, *but* is more common than *than*. Consider this:

- (1) a. Everybody's here **but** George.
 b. I'm sorry **but** I can't stay any longer.
- (2) a. I'm older **than** her.
 b. There was more whisky in it **than** soda.

As given in (1), we can find more examples where *but* can be used both as preposition and as conjunction. However, the use of *than* as preposition only can be seen in informal style, as in (2a).

subordinate conjunctions. The following are examples of *but*'s/*than*'s as coordinate conjunctions which relate two conjuncts of the same syntactic category.

- (20) a. I've finished *all* <the jobs> *but* <**one**>.
 b. *Every*<body>'s here *but* <**George**>⁶
 c. Joe can come *any* day *but* <**Monday**>.
 d. <*Who*> *but* <**John**> would do that?
 e. We've had *no*<thing> *but* <**trouble with this car**>.
 f. They own *not* <one> *but* <**three houses**>.
 g. I have *no other* <friend> *than* <**you**>.
- (21) a. The plan was opposed *not* <by Frederick> *but* <**by Maria**>.
 b. I'd prefer to go <in August> *rather than* <**in July**>.
- (22) a. He is <to be pitied> *rather than* <**to be disliked**>.
 b. I'd *rather* <play tennis> *than* <**swim**>.
 c. They were <screaming> *rather than* <**singing**>.
 d. She <telephoned> *rather than* <**wrote**>.

In the above, the two conjuncts in brackets are of the same category: an NP in (20), a PP in (21), and a VP in (22). It should also be noted that nonassertive items *all*, *every*, *any*, *who*, *no*, and *not* contained in the left conjunct bear a correlative relationship with *but* or (*other*) *than*, exclusive of (21b) and (22).

As Schachter (1977: 89) points out, the syntactic parallelism is not a sufficient condition for conjoinability. Let us consider this.

- (23) a. *John ate with his mother and with a good appetite.
 b. John ate quickly and with a good appetite.

- (24) We looked *every*<where> *but* <**in the shed**>.

The syntactic parallelism would wrongly predict that (23a) is grammat-

6) Superficially this would not seem to be an example of a coordinate conjunction, but it will be treated as such since this sentence can be derived from "Every<body> but <George> is here."

ical, whereas (23b) is ungrammatical. This problem caused Schachter (1977) and Peterson (1981) to establish the need for semantic (or functional) as well as syntactic conditions. According to Schachter and Peterson, the ungrammaticality of (23a) is due to the semantic, or functional, difference between the two conjuncts: an accompaniment adverbial and a manner adverbial. The grammaticality of (23b), on the other hand, shows semantic equivalence: the manner adverbial. Similarly, the two conjuncts in (24) have the same function, that is, the place adverbial, in spite of the different syntactic categories.

There are more tricky examples to handle even though we have resort to the semantic/functional equivalence condition. Let us look at these.

- (25) a. We had *no* <alternative> *but* <to fire him>.
 b. He does *every*<thing> *but* <attend to his own business>.
 c. She's not interested in *any*<thing> *but* <skiing>.
 d. *What*_i can we <do ①> *but* <sit and wait>?⁷⁾
- (26) a. There's *no* <choice> *other than* <to reopen his case>.
 b. They left me with *no* <option> *other than* <to resign>.
- (27) a. The **alternative** to being taken to prison was <to die fighting>.
 b. Our only **choice/option** is <to abandon the meeting>.
 c. The **thing** you should do is <show them your diploma>.
 d. The best **thing** would be <to tell everybody>.
 e. The last **thing** I felt like doing was <dancing>.
 f. **What** everyone likes (best) is <to talk to her>.
 g. **What** I'm going to do to him is <teach him a lesson>.
 h. **What** Bill is doing is <playing for time>.

Our effort to place *but*'s in (25) and (*other*) *than*'s in (26) in the category of correlative coordinate conjunctions is in vain from the perspective of syntactic parallelism. However, the semantic equivalence, in a sense, seems to be able to explain the status of *but* as such. The two conjuncts, or to be more exact, the two elements before and after *but/than* are se-

7) The ① in this sentence and hereafter indicates the trace which is formed after moving one element out. In this sentence 'what' was originally the endorsing element of 'but' and behaves as the antecedent of the trace.

mantically equivalent in the sense that the two elements positioned as subject and complement, as in (27), can be exchanged without any loss of meaning.

3. <X *but/other than* Y> Correlatives and their Similarity to *Wh*-Clefts

In the previous section I showed that the *but/than* in question can be viewed as a correlative coordinate conjunction, thereby having a correlative relationship with the endorsing items in the left conjunct and allowing the head of the left conjunct to maintain a semantically parallel relationship with the right conjunct.

This section explores the semantic properties involved between X and Y in <X *but/other than* Y> correlative constructions and examine the structural and semantic similarity observed between <X *but/other than* Y> correlatives and *wh*-clefts.

3.1. Semantic Relations between X and Y in <X *but/other than* Y> Correlatives

As pointed out, the occurrence of *but/than* as a correlative coordinate conjunction concerns the 'nonassertive' context. The nonassertive context is one in which the speaker never makes an assertive commitment to the truth of the proposition of his or her statement, but rather expresses his or her subjective attitude toward the truth of the proposition by negating, questioning or positively emphasizing that proposition. This context normally involves indefinite determiners such as *no(-)*, *all*, *any(-)*, or *every(-)*, which reveal the positive or negative polarity, and interrogatives such as *who*, *where*, and so forth. (Cf. Quirk *et al* 1985: 83, 138). This Indefiniteness Constraint is illustrated in (28).

- (28) a. He couldn't *but* do that.
 b. He has **no** alternative *but* to go.
 c. We've had **nothing** *but* trouble with this car.
 d. **All** *but* one of the plates were damaged.
 e. He didn't meet **anybody** *but* John.
 f. I could do **everything** *but* stop.

- g. **Who** *but* Rosa could think of something like that?
- h. **What** could he do *but* forgive her?

The determiners in (28a) through (28f) refer to 'nothing' or a 'whole.' It follows that the nonassertive context is directly related to the 'holistic' meaning tied to total affirmation or negation. (28g) and (28h), however, are seemingly not the case. Considering their implication, both of them concern the nonassertive context since those sentences, called rhetorical questions, imply the negated proposition.

Indefinite NPs which can not be used in the nonassertive context, such as plural NPs and NPs with *some*, *many*, and so forth, can not occur with the correlative *but*, and instead must occur with *than* always along with *other*, as shown in (29).

- (29) a. **Someone** *other than*/**but* your brother should be appointed manager.
- b. But **generalizations** *other than*/**but* the presence or absence of a causative sense can be drawn from the data.

The reason why these indefinite NPs can not occur with *but* is that those NPs are related to a 'non-holistic' meaning.

It should be noted that (*other*) *than* is used in two different ways.⁸⁾ One meaning of *other than* is 'exception' or 'exclusion from the whole,' as in *but*. The other is concerned with the meaning of 'alternative' or '(an)other choice(s)'. The very concept of 'exclusion from the whole' is the key to the identification of (*other*) *than* with *but* in this analysis. This also is a clue to the view that <X *but/other than* Y> correlatives are compared to *wh*-clefts since this 'exclusion' is the main semantic function of *wh*-clefts.

Now let us consider the relationship established between two conjuncts. The relation can be inferred from the essential semantic property of *but/other than*, on one hand, and the 'holistic' effect generated from the nonassertive context, on the other. Since the essential meaning of *but/other than* is 'exception,' the thing(s) that is/are exceptional or

8) Of course *but* is also used with two different meanings. This example shows another meaning of *but*: Jackie lives *next door but one*. (=two houses from me.)(Swan 1995: 101). Rather it might be correct to say that the *but* here is a preposition.

excluded is/are nothing *but* a part. Thus the relation of the left conjunct to the right would be that of the whole to a part. From now on, the left conjunct, which includes 'holistic' determiners, will be called 'X' and the right conjunct 'Y.' Given this, the relation between the left and right conjuncts is represented as that of 'Whole vs. Part' and will be interpreted as one of the following specific semantic relations arising from the given context.

First, when X and Y stand in the 'Whole-Part' relation in number, *but/(other) than* occurs felicitously. This is shown in (30) and (31).

- (30) a. He answered <all the questions> *but* <the last one>.
 b. <All> *but* <one of them> promised to come to his leaving party.
 c. You can have <any of the cakes> *but* <this one>.
 d. This book has <no blunders> *but* <a few mistakes>.
- (31) a. I don't know <any French people> *other than* <you>.
 b. I have <no> *other* <friend> *than* <you>.⁹⁾

From the relation between 'all' and '(the last) one' in (30a) and (30b), and that between 'any' and 'this one' in (30c), we can interpret the 'Whole-Part' relation. (30d) is doubtful as to that relation since the no in the left conjunct does not look associated with the holistic meaning. However, paraphrasing the 'no' as 'not ... any,' we can judge that the left conjunct yields the holistic interpretation since 'any' involves the wholistic effect. As for *other than*'s in (31), the 'Whole-Part' relation is interpreted along the same line.

Second, between the head of X and Y there stands the relation of hyponymy. That is, the former is a superordinate, the latter a hyponym. For example, let us consider the relation between an animal and a cat or between a flower and a rose. We know that more specific members like a cat or a dog, or a rose or a lily can be grouped together to form the more general category, an animal or a flower, respectively. This relationship is observed in <X *but/other than* Y> correlatives as well as other structures in English¹⁰⁾, as shown in (32) and (33).

9) Interestingly, *other* can sometimes function as a part of a complex conjunction as a unit 'other than' or can other times function as a part of a complex determiner 'no other.'

10) Other structures showing hyponymy and the relevant examples are shown in (1):

(32) I like <all **drinks**> but <**whisky**>.

(33) No other than <**Sunday**> is convenient for us.
(<- No <(days of the week)> other than <**Sunday**>.)

The relation between 'drinks' and 'whisky' in (32a) and that between 'days of the week' and 'Sunday' in (33) are identified as that of hyponymy.

Third, between X and Y there is established a relation of a set to its member(s). Those relations can be seen between a week and a day and between all rooms and a particular room, as shown in (34).

(34) a. I could come <any **day**> but <**Thursday**>.
b. I've cleaned <all the **rooms**> but <the **bathroom**>.

Fourth, generals and specifics are realized in X and Y, respectively, of <X but/other than Y> correlatives. In this case, Y is a case or example of X. Let us consider the following.

(35) a. I have <no **choice**> but <to accept the fact>.
b. They have left us with <no other **choice**> than <to take formal action>.

(36) **What** are we here <for **t**> but <to discuss the matter>?

(37) He does <every**thing**> but <to attend to his own business>.

(38) **What** did she want <**t**> in life but <to see the lad prosper>?

(39) It's the same <every**where**> but <in **Scotland**>.

Notice that all the above examples but (39) are cases where *but/(other) than* is followed by to-infinitives. (35) indicates that from X, which is a

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- (1) a. An X and other Ys. ('John and other *students*')
- b. There's no Y more beautiful than an X. ('There's no *flower* more beautiful than **the rose**')
- c. They like all Y except Xs. ('They like all fruits except **apples**')
- d. John reads Ys all day - mostly Xs. ('John read books all day - mostly **novels**')
- (Cf. Lee & Ahn 2003: 262)

possible set of choices to do, Y, one choice 'to accept the fact' or 'to take formal action,' is excluded. (36) indicates that from X, which is an unknown set of reasons, one reason realized in Y is excluded. In (37) and (38), from X, which is everything to do, one activity or action realized in Y is excluded. In (39), from X, which is every place expected, Y, one particular place, is excluded.

On the other hand, there are examples, shown in (40), which make the 'Whole-Part' relation more abstract. These are cases where the conventional frame of correlatives has become fossilized into idioms consisting of fixed elements, meaning 'only,' 'never,' or 'almost.' Nevertheless it is still possible to analyze them in terms of the 'Whole-Part' relation.

- (40) a. He's <nothing> but <a criminal>.
 b. He was <anything> but <forceful>.
 c. <Nothing> would satisfy the child but <that I place her on my lap>.
 d. I am <all> but <ready>.

All the examples except (40d) show that the left conjuncts along with *but*'s are fossilized into a unit, used as idioms functioning as modifiers. The reason that 'all' in the left conjunct in (40d) can stand alone without possible heads such as 'thing' would seem to be that the word 'all' encompasses '-thing' in its own right.¹¹⁾ Since the meaning of a '-thing' in the left conjunct can encompass quality, personality, state, action, and others, the syntactic categories standing in a semantically parallel relation to that '-thing' would be NP, AP, or S.¹²⁾

Now let us analyze the above examples by means of the 'Whole-Part' relation. In (40a), from the negative whole, 'no quality,' one quality of 'a criminal' is excluded, thereby creating the effect of 'only a criminal.' In (40b), from the positive whole, 'any personality,' one feature of 'being forceful' is excluded, thereby creating the effect of modifying 'forceful'

11) In a similar way, a meaning 'one' can be claimed to be implicit in the meaning of the 'all' in (a).

(a) We're <all> here but <Mary>.

(b) <All of us> are here but <Mary>.

If (b) is a paraphrase of (a), the presence of the implicit meaning of 'one' is confirmed.

12) It was already shown in (35) through (38) that VP (or S) can be realized in the right conjunct to establish a semantically parallel relation with '-thing' in the left conjunct.

with 'never.' (40c) says that there is no action satisfying the child and from the negative whole, one action of 'that-clause' is excluded.

So far it has been shown that given the status of *but/other than* as a correlative coordinate conjunction, the left conjunct occurs in non-assertive indefinite context. It is borne out that the semantic as well as syntactic parallelism stands between (the head of) the left and right conjuncts, and that between the two a semantic relation must be maintained, which has been identified as the 'Whole vs. Part' relation.

3.2. <X *but/other than* Y> Correlatives' Structural and Functional Similarity to *Wh*-Clefts

In this section it will be argued that based on the structural and functional similarity to *wh*-clefts which will be observed, <X *but/than* Y> correlatives are cleft sentences which have undergone the process of clefting whereby the right conjunct is moved back to the focus position. This argument of the present correlatives as a focusing device will be primarily supported by the lexical aspects of those constructions and further supported by the structural aspects similar to *wh*-clefts, which is a typical type of focusing device in English.

The earlier transformation grammar model assumed that *wh*-cleft sentences like (41a) are generated relating to declarative sentences like (41d).

- (41) a. What you heard was an explosion.
 b. It was an explosion that you heard.
 c. It was an explosion, what you heard.
 d. You heard an explosion.

Transformationalists like Akmajian (1970) and Emonds (1976) derived *it*-clefts in (41b) via rules of relativization, extraposition, and focus placement, and *wh*-clefts in (41a) via rules of relativization and focus placement. Gundel (1977), on the other hand, proposed that both types of clefts are derived from right-dislocated sentences like (41c) via a reduction process.

The correct derivation is not this paper's concern. The main concern is with the analysis of <X *but/other than* Y> correlatives based on the structural and functional similarity to *wh*-clefts. The most striking aspect of the structural isomorphism between <X *but/other than* Y> con-

structions and *wh*-clefts is that the syntactic categories of Y in the former are identical to those in the focus position of the latter. As is well known, focus position of *wh*-clefts is occupied by all the categories except PP and AdvP: VP, AP, NP, and S.¹³⁾

First of all, let us consider the case where Y is occupied by the non-finite clause.

(42) a. **What** I enjoyed **was** <buying a new hat>.

b. I <enjoyed> + <buying a new hat>.

(43) a. She enjoyed **nothing but** <going shopping>.

b. She <enjoyed> + <going shopping>.

(42a) is generated by cleaving the whole sentence into two parts as in (42b) and subsequently inserting headless relative pronouns and copular verbs. As a result, *wh*-clefts are composed of headless relatives and equatives. According to Gundel (1977), (42a) is functionally associated with the way a question 'What did you enjoy?' can be answered like 'What I enjoyed: buying a new hat.' In a similar way, <X *but/other than* Y> correlatives appear to be formed by cleaving the whole sentence into two parts as in (43b) and subsequently inserting a conjunction *but* preceded by a nonassertive NP whose head is semantically parallel to 'going shopping,' which is moved back to the focus position. From a semantic perspective, these two constructions seem to show a contrastive function. That is, by uttering *wh*-clefts like (42a), along with an assertion that Y (i.e., 'buying a new hat'), a focus, is a member singled out from a set X (i.e., 'the things I enjoyed') there is an implication that the remaining members are excluded and consequently the focus is highlighted. In contrast, by uttering exclusive correlatives like (43a), along with an assertion that Y (i.e., 'going shopping'), a focus, is an excluded member singled out from a set X (i.e., 'the things I enjoyed') there is an implication that according to the polarity in the left conjunct, the unexcluded members can be selected or the excluded member can be selected, thereby creating the effect that the focused element is highlighted because of its exceptionality.

13) *It*-clefts restrictively allow NP and PP to occur in the focus position (Delahunty 1984, Kim 1986, among others).

Now let us have a look at the case where infinitives appear in the focus position, shown in (44) for to-infinitives and (45) for root infinitives.

- (44) a. **What** everyone likes (best) **is** <to talk to her>.
 b. I have **no** alternative **but** <to fire Gibson>.
 c. They have left us with **no other** choice **than** <to take formal action>.
- (45) a. **What** John did **was** <go>.
 b. She did **nothing but** <complain the whole time she was here>.
 c. She would **not** do **other than** <complain about it>.

It needs to be noted that <X *but/other than* Y> correlatives and *wh*-clefts share the possibility that two types of infinitives can be chosen as a focus in the process of clefting. The choice of to-infinitives or root infinitives as the focus depends upon the underlying structures assumed, which would be the forms obtained by omitting the correlative coordinate conjunctions *but/other than* and the endorsing elements in the left conjuncts. In (44), the underlying structure of (a) would be roughly 'Everyone likes to talk to her,' that of (b) 'I have ... alternative to fire/*fire Gibson,' and that of (c) 'They have left us with ... choice to take/*take formal action.' In (45), the underlying structure of (a) would be roughly 'John did go/*did to go,'¹⁴ that of (b) 'She did complain/*did to complain the whole time she was here,' and that of (c) 'She would complain/*to complain about it.' These examples show that the choice to be made between the two types of infinitives is reflected in those underlying structures obtained by omitting the correlative coordinate conjunctions *but/other than* and the endorsing elements in the left conjuncts. Suggestively, from this structural likeness between <X *but/other than* Y> correlatives and *wh*-clefts it might be inferred that they can be treated in a similar way.

Unlike (44), to-infinitives in the focus position of (46) function as adverbials, used for purpose or reason. Both constructions in (46) show a striking likeness in structure.

14) Note that the reason that we view the underlying form of *complained* in (45b) as 'did complain' is the same as the reason that we view the form of *went* in (45a) as 'did do.'

- (46) a. **What** Bill went to the store *for* **was** <to buy shaving cream>.
 b. **What** are we here *for* **but** <to discuss the matter>?

- (46') a. Bill went to the store <to buy shaving cream>.
 b. We are here <to discuss the matter>.

What is striking here is that sentences in (46), which would have those in (46') as roughly the relevant underlying structures, take 'for,' which those in (46') lack, in addition to the insertion of *but* and its endorsing element *what*. This has to do with the semantic equivalence/parallelism constraint, which was mentioned in Section 2. The appearance of 'for' in (46a) can be accounted for owing to the relation between a (partially ordered) set (poset) of reasons in *wh*-clause and one reason chosen as a focus.¹⁵⁾ That is, considering a focussing device as *wh*-clefts and a syntactic constraint of *wh*-clause, *wh*-clause in (46a) must contain expressions of reason, such as *for*-phrases.

Like *wh*-clefts, <*X but/other than Y*> correlatives also take NP, AP, and *S'* in *Y*, the focus position. Consider the following.

- (47) a. **What** I heard **was** <an explosion>.
 b. He eats **nothing but** <hamburgers>.
 c. She is interested in **anything other than** <science>.

- (48) a. **What** John is **is** <tall>.
 b. That little bridge is **anything but** <safe>.
 c. She can **hardly** be **other than** <grateful>.

- (49) a. **What** the teachers required **was** <that they all leave early>.
 b. I know **nothing** about him **but** <that he lives next door>.

15) Drawing on Chomsky's (1971) and Jackendoff's (1972) 'focus-presupposition' distinction, Prince (1986) analyzes cleft sentences as consisting of two parts: the open proposition (OP) and the focus. The OP contains an unbound variable whose instantiation within the clefting represents a member of some salient or inferrable set. According to Prince, (1) is explained as described in (2).

(1) What Bill went to the store *for* **was** <to buy shaving cream>.

(2) a. Bill went to the store for what reason?

b. OP = Bill went to the store for *X* reason, where *X* is a member of the set {reasons}
 c. Focus = 'to buy shaving cream'

Wh-clefts, *but*-correlatives, and *other than*-correlatives all allow NP, AP, and S' in the focus position.¹⁶⁾ In particular, as seen in (36), (38), and (40), cases where AP and S take the focus position, such as (48) and (49), are closely related to the internal meaning of what and 'thing.' Since what and 'thing' have almost any meaning but human and place, such as state, quality, property, personality, fact, and the like,¹⁷⁾ they maintain a syntactically or semantically parallel relation.

It has been shown so far that the syntactic categories of the right conjunct of *but/other than*-correlatives are exactly the same as those of the focused constituents in *wh*-clefts and that those categories include almost all phrases, as *what's* capacity shows. Semantically, the highlighting effect created by the focused element's being singled out from the rest members of the set is observed in *but/other than*-correlatives. The only difference regarding the effect between these two structures seems to lie in the fact that the highlighting effect in *wh*-clefts results from the exclusion of the focus from the negative or positive whole set, whereas the highlighting effect in *but/other than*-correlatives results from the exclusion of the remaining elements from the whole set for the selection of the focused element itself.

4. Proposal: So-called '*but/than*' Clefts

It was noted in passing that in relation to *wh*-clefts, *but/other than*-correlatives may be focusing constructions that assign the restrictive meaning to the right conjunct to the effect that only the member represented by the right conjunct is excluded from the whole, whether negative or positive. Thus in this section, it is proposed that *but/other than*-correlatives should be viewed as clefts. The facts that were explored in the previous section will be used to define so-called *but/than*-clefts. The *but/than*-clefts are proposed as follows.

16) Those examples of *other than*-correlatives which allow S in Y position were hardly found.

17) The following example shows that the NP that *what* is equated with must be non-agentive (Prince 1978: 886, fn 3).

(a) John made me laugh.

(b) What made me laugh was John.

According to Prince, in (a) *John* may be read as agentive or non-agentive, but only the non-agentive reading is possible in (b). That is, (b) is not the case where John as agent made me laugh, but the case where John's non-verbal acts, for example, did.

(50) The '*but/than*-clefts' are formed in the following steps:

- 1st step: to cleave a given sentence in front of an exceptional element chosen for focalization and insert *but* or (*other*) *than* in between the two pieces,
- 2nd step: to provide the left conjunct of *but* or (*other*) *than* with proper determiners as endorsing items, and
- 3rd step: to supplement, after those determiners, head nouns that can stand in a necessary relation to the right conjunct.¹⁸⁾

In addition, some constraints are needed for conjoining the conjuncts to the left and right of *but* or *other than*.

(51) Constraints for <X *but/other than* Y> correlatives

- a) The endorsing elements in X must be those indefinite determiners and interrogatives which are sensitive to the non-assertive context, such as *no*(-), *all*, *any*(-), or *every*(-), which reveal the positive or negative polarity, and *who*, *where*, and so forth.¹⁹⁾
- b) There must be a meaning relation of 'Whole vs. Part' between X and Y.
- c) There must be syntactic or semantic equivalence/parallelism between the head of X and Y.

The derivation of and the constraints for '*but/other than*-clefts' are illustrated in (52) and (53).

- (52) a. I saw [_____ ▼] <John> at the party.
 b. I saw [all/no friends but] <John> at the party.
 c. I saw [no one other than] <John> at the party.
- (53) a. [_____ ▼] <Saturday> is OK.
 b. [Any day but] <Saturday> is OK.
 c. [Any day other than] <Saturday> is OK.

18) Supplementation can be made via a simple addition of an independent word (e.g., *alternative*, as in (28b)) or via morphological processes like a sort of compounding (e.g., '*nothing*,' as in (28c)) or via an absorption into a word (e.g., 'what,' as in (46b)).

19) As already shown in (29), (*other*) *than*, exceptionally, is also able to occur in the assertive context, which involves *some* or plural morpheme.

When we need to focalize *John* in (52a) or *Saturday* in (53a), we must take steps as in (50). As indicated in (52a), we have to break up the whole sentence into two pieces, placing *John* in the focus position. In (53a), however, since the focus desired is the leftmost element, the cleaving is vacuous. Then as in (52b-52c) or (53b-53c), we have to put in the left conjunct nonassertive indefinite determiners headed by nouns that can be superordinates to the focus *John* or *Saturday* (i.e., *friends* and *one* for (52); *day* for (53)).²⁰ These actions taken conform with the constraints proposed in (51). At this point, it should be noted that these clefting processes render (52b) and (52c) an 'exclusive' reading that an element is singled out *exclusively* from a possible set. Therefore so-called *but/other than*-clefts in (b) and (c), unlike (a), are read in the way *John* or *Saturday* is highlighted as a focus since it is the only member singled out positively or negatively from the possible set of friends/persons or days of the week, yielding a contrastive implication. Without any reading of *John*, as a friend, with an intentional focus, the difference between (52a) and the rest is of little significance.

Now let us consider the clefting process in (54) to (58). These are the cases where infinitives are to be focalized.

- (54) a. He desired [_____ ▼] <to succeed>.
 b. He desired [no<thing> but] <to succeed>.
 c. He did[n't any<thing (to do)> other than] <to succeed>.
- (55) a. I have [_____ ▼] <to accept the fact>.
 b. I have [no <choice> but] <to accept the fact>.
 c. I have [no other <choice> than] <to accept the fact>.
- (56) a. He cries.
 b. He does [_____ ▼] <cry>.
 c. He does [no<thing> but] <cry>.
- (57) a. [We can [_____ ▼] <sit and wait>.
 b. [[**What**] can we [<do t> but] <sit and wait>?

20) In (52c), not only *no*, but also *some*, which is not assertive, can be allowed in determiner position in the left conjunct, as was earlier mentioned in (29).

- (58) a. We can [▼] <laugh>.
 b. We can [not but] <laugh>.
 c. We can [<do nothing> but] <laugh>.
 d. We can [not <do other> than] <laugh>.

The result of clefting is like insertion of the left conjunct along with conjunctions *but/than*, which is marked as [] in the above examples. The differences between the examples in (54) through (58) and those in (52) and (53) are that the heads of the left conjuncts in the former are rather restricted largely to ‘-thing,’ *wh*-words, or *alternative/choice/option/...* and that the left conjuncts are always restricted to the (explicitly or implicitly) negative context. This first difference, as already shown in (25) to (27), is due to the semantic equivalence/parallelism involved in between two conjuncts, which is considered as a condition for the status of *but/other than* as correlative coordinate conjunctions. The fact pertaining to choosing types of infinitives is well accounted for by assuming that *but/other than*-correlatives are clefts. In other words, the presence of two types of infinitives which follow *but/other than* is a hallmark of *but/other than*-clefts. Thus the choice to be made between the two types of infinitives is reflected in those underlying structures obtained, as shown in (54a), (55a), (56b), (57a), and (58a), by omitting *but/other than* and the endorsing elements in the left conjuncts.

The second difference relating to negative context is due to the exclusive reading of *but/other than*. Since this negative context, that is, ‘nothing but’ or ‘no (...) other than,’ renders the left conjunct the exclusive reading (e.g., ‘only’), the head of *but/other than* can be lost, as in (58b). Otherwise the function of the head of the left conjunct as head weakens because of the consistent exclusive reading, and instead ‘do ... (-thing)’ or ‘do ... (other)’ and the right conjunct (i.e., root infinitive) stand in a semantic parallelism. The placement of the infinitives in the syntactic focus position in all the examples in (54) through (58) is made with a view to rendering the right conjunct the exclusive reading. Therefore *but/other than*-correlatives in (54) through (58) are viewed as expressing ‘NP only VP’ in a roundabout way for a rhetorical purpose.

More telling are (59) and (60), which involve the reason/purpose infinitive.

- (59) a. We are here [_____ ▼] <to discuss the matter>.
 b. [[What] are we here <for t> [but]] <to discuss the matter>.
- (60) a. He went to church [_____ ▼] <to get married>.
 b. He [[never] went to church [but]] <to get married>.
 c. He did [[not] go to church <for any reason/purpose but>] <to get married>.

We assume that *but*-correlatives like (59b) and (60b) are derived from (59a) and (60a), respectively, via *but*-cleft. The presence of the preposition *for* in (59b), which (59a) lacks, corroborate the status of *but* as a correlative coordinate conjunction, which is tested by the semantic parallelism. That is, in (59), <for t(=what)> and <to discuss the matter>, both of which are reason/purpose adverbials, are in a semantically parallel relation. On the other hand, (60b) seemingly violates the semantic parallelism condition, but as shown in (60c), it never can be considered to embrace reason/purpose meaning. Therefore this raises no problem for that condition.

As shown in (61), the reason why the gerund form is followed by *but/other than* can be accounted for by *but/than*-clefts.

- (61) a. She's not interested in [_____ ▼] <skiing>.
 b. She's not interested in [_____ anything but] <skiing>.
 c. She is not interested in [anything other than] <skiing>.

The assumed underlying structure for (61b) and (61c), which is (61a), would be a clue for this question. That is, the form that can follow the preposition is a gerund. Here also can be seen the semantic parallelism between 'thing (other)' and 'skiing' and it would be possible to take, instead of 'thing,' other superordinates to 'skiing,' such as 'sports' or 'activities,' as heads of the left conjunct.

Finally, consider the cases where AP, VP and S' are moved into the focus position.

- (62) a. That little bridge is [_____ ▼] <safe>.
 b. That little bridge is [anything but] <safe>.

- (63) a. I am [_____ ▼] <ready>.

- b. I am [all but] <ready>.
- (64) a. She [▼] <kissed us>.
 b. She [all but] <kissed us>.
- (65) a. She must be [▼] <grateful>.
 b. She can [hardly] be [other than] <grateful>.
- (66) a. I know [▼ (about him) ▼] <that he lives next door>.
 b. I know [no<thing> (about him) but] <that he lives next door>.
 c. Perhaps it's [a good thing] <that Dizzy retired>.

In all these cases except (66), predicates such as AP and VP can only be focalized in *but/than*-clefts and the left conjunct here (i.e., ‘anything/nothing/all’ for *but* or ‘no/hardly’ for *other than*) is without exception fossilized along with *but/other than* into a unit of idiom, meaning ‘never,’ ‘only,’ or ‘almost.’ (66) shows that (66b) is obtained by this process: first to cleave in front of *that*-clause and then to insert *but* and the endorsing element *no* and its head ‘-thing’ is done. Here also is seen the semantic parallelism between ‘-thing’ and *that*-clause, the evidence of which is (66c).

By viewing *but/other than*-correlatives as *but/than*-clefts, they have been proven to be focusing constructions that assign the restrictive meaning to the right conjunct to the effect that only the member represented by the right conjunct is excluded from the whole, whether negative or positive. In addition, this process of clefting has been corroborated by the appearance of various types of syntactic categories in the right conjunct, that is, the focus position.

5. Concluding Remarks

There has been no agreement among scholars and dictionaries as to the categorial status of cases where *but* or *other than* is followed by a *to*-infinitive, root infinitive, gerund, AP, and the like.

From the discussions so far, these tricky cases have been viewed as *but/other than*-correlative constructions, where *but* or *than* is treated as a correlative coordinate conjunction. These constructions were satisfied

by some extended version of the semantic equivalence or parallelism which was proposed by Schachter (1977) and Peterson (1981). According to this version, such morphemes or words as 'thing,' 'what,' 'choice,' 'alternative,' or 'option' are in a semantically parallel relation to the *to*-infinitive in the right conjunct of *but/other than*-correlative constructions. Other words, such as '(no/any)thing' or 'all,' are semantically parallel to such categories as AP, VP or S'.

Two semantic distinguishing features of *but/other than* were revealed. One feature was that the left conjunct is sensitive to the nonassertive context, which was shown to be directly related to the 'holistic' meaning tied to total affirmation or negation. The other is that a relation was established between two conjuncts. This was shown to be the relation of 'Whole vs. Part' and was interpreted as one of the specific semantic relations arising from the context given.

An attempt to propose *but/than*-clefts for the correlative constructions in question was motivated by their similarity to *wh*-clefts in terms of patterns of semantic and syntactic behaviors. That is, syntactically, *but/than*-clefts take the same categories in the focus position as *wh*-clefts and semantically, *but/other than*-correlatives are the same focusing devices as *wh*-clefts in that the highlighting effect can be created by the focused element's being singled out from the rest of the members of the set. The only difference lies in the fact that the effect from *but/other than*-clefts results from the exclusion of the focus from the negative or positive whole set, whereas the effect of *wh*-clefts results from the exclusion of the remaining elements from the whole set for the selection of the focused element itself. That is, *but/other than*-clefts, along with an assertion that a focused element is an excluded member singled out from a set of individuals, activities, events, states, or places, have an implication that according to the polarity in the left conjunct, the excluded member can be selected or the unexcluded members can be selected, thereby creating the effect that the focused element is highlighted because of its exceptionality. Functionally, given the *but/than*-clefting, *but/other than*-correlatives are viewed as expressing 'NP only VP' in a roundabout way for a rhetorical purpose, compared with their assumed underlying sentences.

Cases which were adverse to this clefting analysis were those where the left conjunct lacks its head and *but/than* is followed by an infinitive. These cases were considered as examples of fossilization of

phrases, such as 'nothing/anything/all but,' into idioms, which seem to be in the process of lexicalization.

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Doo-shick Kim

Department of English Language and Literature

Gyeongsang National University

900 Gazwa-dong

Jinju, Gyungnam, 660-701

E-mail: kimdsk@gsnu.ac.kr, ddsskim@dreamwiz.com

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